N°. II.

THE

THESPIAN MIRROR.

SATURDAY EVENING, JANUARY 4, 1806.

Biographical Notice of MRS. WHITLOCK,

THE AMERICAN SIDDONS.

Mrs. WHITLOCK sprung from a root which has produced some of the best Theatrical performers in the world; and it is by no means surprising that the sister of Mr. J. KEMBLE, and Mrs. SIDDONS, should possess the abilities requisite for a distinguished actress, when dramatic talent has appeared to be almost the *prerogative* of the KEMBLE family.

Miss ELIZABETH KEMBLE, now Mrs. WHITLOCK, was in the earlier part of her life, apprenticed to a mantua-maker in Leomister, (England;) as her father, the manager of an itinerant company of comedians, was anxious that none of his children should ever come upon the stage—a very laudable wish in all parents; but a wish, which had it been fulfilled in the present instance must have kept his family in obscurity and indigence, compared with its present eminence; and must have deprived the drama, of some of its brightest ornaments.

The example of her brothers and sisters, seduced Mrs. WHITLOCK, notwithstanding the prescriptions of her father, to join the thespian train; and she had performed some time in the provincial Theatres with *eclat*, when the great success of Mrs. SIDDONS, in London, in 1783, induced the proprietors of Drury Lane to engage our heroine...and she performed one or two seasons at that Theatre, though with little success; probably owing to the machinations of a party, who were said to have been obtained by interested persons to injure her.

Soon after this, Mr. WHITLOCK, manager of a company at Newcastle, upon Tyne, married Miss KEMBLE, and of his company she was long the leading actress...till Mrs. WHITLOCK was re-engaged in London, where she was handsomely received in many first rate characters. She was afterwards invited to AMERICA where her talents have met with bril-

liant encouragement: and she is at this time with Mr. PLACIDE's company, in Charleston (S. C.)

Mrs. WHITLOCK's person, voice and countenance are strongly marked with the family likeness of the house of KEMBLE, but her figure is ill calculated for the stage. She excells in deep tragedy—and like her sister is greatly celebrated in the part of ISABELLA, in the *Fatal Marriage*.

SOPHIA WOODBINE.

A Tale of Truth from the MSS. of a Lady.

TO MISS ELINORA HERTFORD.

DEAREST MADAM,

Impressed with the most grateful sentiments, for the shelter from misery and want, which your goodness afforded me, at a time when I was rejected by those who were bound by every tie of virtue, and of honor, to protect, and support me, I can scacely find words to convey to you the sensations of my heart, for that kindly tenderness which you have discovered for one, known to you, only by her misfortunes.

How seldom do we find enough of magnanimity in mankind, to pardon, errors though ever so greatly mitigated by the circumstances, which occasion them. Humanity is always prone to transgress; but too seldom do we find man sufficiently charitable to forgive the faults of others, however great their own: and how frequent are the instances of those, who at first led into error through misfortune, or inadvertency; by the mercilless treatment of the world, have been driven into every excess of vice and wickedness—while, had they met some pitying angel like my dearest *Elinora*, to soothe their sorrows, and compassionate their distress, they might have lived to expiate their follies, and their crimes, at the hallowed shrine of true repentance.

But it is needless for me to waste my time and paper, in recommending those heavenly attributes, which to you, are inherent from nature: suffice it for the present that I confine my pen, to a brief and artless account, of that unhappy being, who has been so greatly favoured by your bountiful attentions; and while she retraces with a tearful eye, the various, and many coloured scenes of her life, let her look up with gratitude to that GOD who has supported her through all her trials, to introduce her to the notice and protection of *Elinora Hertford*.

You have probably heard me observe, that all my relations were Americans: and that before the revolution, in this then unhappy country, my Father was one of the most opulent men, in South Carolina. When the Americans at the unfortunate period to which we refer, flew either to the standard of their King, or enlisted under the banners of Liberty, my Father, having embraced the cause of royalty, was rifled by his opponents, of every valuable article, which he possessed: and with much difficulty escaped to England, with his wife, and three children, saving only, from the wreck of his affairs, a small chest of papers and money. By the assistance of the Marquis, then Lord Cornwallis, with whom my father had been on terms of intimacy, he obtained a pension of one hundred pounds sterling, per annum, to devolve after his death on his family, whose number was now decreased by the regretted loss of my elder sister, on our passage across the Atlantic.

Permit me to pass in mournfully pleasing recollection, those well remembered scenes of innocent pleasure which crowned my earlier years, to that moment in which heaven was pleased to commence my sorrows, by depriving me of a mother, who, tender hearted sunk under a series of complicated miseries. Child, as then I was, every occurrence served to recal those happy moments which I had spent with my dearest mother... And even at that early age, I was so sensibly impressed with the loss which I had sustained that for three days I was deprived of my reason, and awaked from my delirium only to call with affliction more poignant, upon the hallowed name of my deceased maternal friend, and beloved protectress. But all my sighs were vain...my tears only flowed to increase my sorrow...And the only consolation which humanity could offer, was to weap over her urn, in silent misery.

(To be continued.)

The American Stage.

Imitatio vitæ, speculum consuetudinis, imago veritatis....Cicero.
The Imitation of Life...the Mirror of Manners...the Transcript of Truth.

THEATRICAL REGISTER.

"'Tis with our judgments, as our watches....none
"Go just alike....but each believes his own."

IT is with much reluctance and no small share of chagrin that, in so early a stage of his progress, the Editor of this Miscellany has to acknowledge his inability to furnish his promised supply for the Register of the

Theatrical Performances of the past week. The simple truth is, his avocations have been such as almost entirely to interfere with his personal attendance. Under such circumstances, that he might not have this department of his work quite barren, he has obtained permission of the Editor of the New-York Evening Post, to avail himself of two criticisms which have appeared in that paper for the past week: that of Friday by the Editor himself, the other (inserted with some variations) by a literary correspondent; and in the justice and correctness of which, from what he has heard and seen he has entire confidence.

MONDAY EVENING.

Blind Bargain and Prize.

This play, although it appears to have been composed "*at loose ends,*" is not devoid of attraction: and its plot, though imperfect, inconsistent and inaccurate, is somewhat interesting. As such the audience *heard it out*, with considerable applause.

Mr. Young this evening made his first appearance in Comedy. Having seen him on two former occasions in Tragedy, with considerable satisfaction, we were led to form equal expectations from his comic walk. His appearance is prepossessing, and without flattering his vanity, we have seldom seen a handsomer man on our stage.

The part of the Oxonian blade was well sustained, and considerable credit is due to Mr. Young for his judicious conception of the character. He was not, however, by any means faultless, for in imitating the Beaux "he rather overstep'd the modesty of nature. Would he correct his too precipitate pronunciation," and "in the very torrent, tempest, and (as I may say) whirlwind of his *passion*, beget a temperance, that may give it smoothness," we should attend his representations, with much greater satisfaction.

It may correspond with the playing of a celebrated *trans-atlantic* comedian, (Kelly) but with us it was rather ill-judged. It is, however, a difficult character to perform, and Mr. Young has merit for his earnest endeavours to please. We do not hesitate to believe, that by care and attention, his talents will enable him to aspire to the first walks of the Drama.

Sir Andrew Analyse, by Mr. Johnson, we thought might more appropriately have been cast for Mr. Hogg, as we think it more in his line of acting. Mr. Johnson, however, is one of the first supporters of our company, and whatever character he attempts, he usually plays with success.

Mr. Tyler's Villars was respectable. In the last scene, where an explanation takes place between him and Mrs. Villers, who suspected his fidelity, Mr. T. acquitted himself with much credit.

Giles Woodbine, by Mr. Martin, had a good representative. The

clownish uncultivated rustic was well personated. Though he too often took unlicensed liberties with the author, by *adding, transposing*, and *curtailing*.

Jack Analyse was indifferently played—coldness, inanimation, and incorrectness, were the most prominent features.

Bailey in Frank added *verbal inaccuracy*, to bad playing—a fault of all others censurable in an actor. The "twinkling of the firmament" took away any pleasure to be derived from his performance.

Mrs. Villers was supported by Mrs. Johnson, in a pleasing and judicious style throughout the whole character.

We missed Mrs. Hogg, as Mrs. Gurnet. She has a poor substitute in Mrs. Simpson, whose manners are by no means easy nor characteristic, and who generally speaks so low, so thick, and so mumbling, as scarcely to be heard any distance from the stage.

Sophia Woodbine was played by Mrs Young. We are told that she is a *noviciate* on the stage, and shall therefore briefly observe, that she appears to have talents, which by cultivation may, in time make her useful.

Mr. Ringwood forgot his *manners*. We would inform him that it is customary for a *servant* to take off his hat when speaking to his superiors.

The Prize, as the after-piece, was better performed than the play. Mrs. Jones appeared in Caroline. With the talents of this lady scarcely any piece could fail to interest and to please. She is deservedly the favorite of the town, and richly merits the applause and admiration bestowed upon her.

Miss Dellinger was a very good Juba, but we would advise her, if she contemplates another essay in that character, to be more attentive to the coloring of her face. Black, white and red, variously disposed, are not, in our opinion the characteristics of a negro's visage.

We have no music all the time the house is filling, until a few moments before the curtain rises; and then by way of prelude, some minutes are taken up in tuning the instruments. Between the acts we seldom have any music at all; but are left to enjoy the whistle and the noise of the gallery. The disapprobation of the audience is totally disregarded.

CURATII.

FRIDAY EVENING.

Hamlet—All the World's a Stage, &c.

Mr. Fennel's personation of Hamlet for the first time on our boards, attracted a full and genteel house. A difference against Mr. Fennel, and in favor of Mr. Cooper, was immediately visible, in point of youth, figure, and voice. The same justice compels us to say that unless by comparison, Mr. Fennel appeared to no disadvantage even in those qualities; excepting, indeed, that his voice, owing to his great exertion, began very much to fail at the end of the 4th act, when we left the house.

Those who have an intimate knowledge of the author, and who distinctly remember Mr.Cooper's manner of playing, particularly, most striking scenes and passages, must have been uncommonly entertained last

evening in comparing Mr. Fennel, all the way he went along, with that celebrated actor. Disregarding the well known prepossessions of the town respecting Mr. Cooper's Hamlet, we fear not to decide for ourselves. We do therefore pronounce, that with a few exceptions, particularly, at the moments of the ghost's entering into the chamber scene, Mr. Fennel's Hamlet is superior to Mr. Cooper's personation of it previous to his last return. A superiority too, (and to Mr. Fennel's credit it is to be mentioned) arising principally from his more correct, and more forcible conception of his author. Mr. Cooper is occasionally excellent, but he very frequently offends the enthusiastic admirers of Shakespeare by false emphasis or mistaken inflection; shewing, that though he cannot be said to misunderstand Shakespeare, yet, that he adopts his ideas less completely than his rival. It must however be mentioned, that in the scene with Ophelia, advising her to get her to a nunnery, Mr. F. played it in too uncourteous—too harsh a manner. Mr. Cooper used to play it so; but since his last transatlantic visit, he has softened and improved it, and his voice now assumes tones of tenderness and sympathy. In the scene of the play we recommend to Mr F. that he, by all means, sit up in a chair. As he lay upon the floor, he reminded us of the passage,

" Extended long and large,
" Lay floating many a rood, in bulk as huge," &c.

We here enter our critical protest against the black and white leg. There's too much method in this line of madness.

Mr. Fennel has one very vicious habit, and that no trifling one; it is that of dropping into almost a whisper at the conclusion of the sentence when the word happens not to be emphatic, especial when too is the accent on the antepenultimate; so that those who set at any distance from the stage often lose the connection. Nor can any one, however advantageously situated, at all times catch what he says, unless aided by a previous acquaintance with the language of the play. This is Mr. Fennel's greatest fault. We have, however, another charge to prefer of no trifling nature in the court of criticism where Shakspeare is concerned. It is no less than altering the text. By what authority, or under what pretence, does he give " *siege* of troubles? " the *scourge* that patient merit of the unworthy take," and makes us bear those *wrongs* we have," *cum aliis*. Various are the readings of dull and tasteless commentators on our immortal bard, none can be found to justify the above; and Mr. Fennel is one of the last from whom we should have expected these aberrations.—Mr. F. deserves credit for his correct orthoepy; particularly, for avoiding the ridiculous, miserable affectation, of changing the sound of *y* into that of *e* in *thy*, *my*, and some few others, which is always in serious speaking to be reprobated.

Had we time and room it would afford us pleasure to point out the particular passages and scenes in which Mr. F. excelled. We have not. It would, be injustice not to mention that, when he asked " is it the king?" it was with a force and meaning never heard from Mr. Cooper. And, in " aye, there's the *rub*." Mr. Fennel is the only speaker we ever heard who did justice to the last important word, by giving it the exact rising circumflexion so judiciously adapted and applied to it by Walker, in one of his examples in his rhetorical grammar. We cannot extend the compliment to his " Mother, *you* have my father much offended," marked by the same author with the falling circumflex. If our actors were students, we should recommend to them to give their days and nights to the

various works of this excellent author. On the whole, we have no hesitation in awarding the palm of excellence to Mr. Fennel's Hamlet.

Mrs. Jones seemed to have adopted the erroneous opinion, that nothing was to be done with Ophelia till the 4th act; and reserved all her power for the single scene of her madness. In this, she indeed made an appeal to the heart, which is seldom equalled in a theatre, and the effect was felt throughout the house. *There's rue for you, and here's some for me,* were pronounced in a tone of tenderness and woe that were irresistible.

Poetry.

AN ADDRESS,

Spoken by the Miss Hodgkinsons, at their Benefit in this City.

FANNY.

Ere three short winters with their snows are fled,
A Mother dies; a Father, too, is dead:
Their little Orphans, *we*, this night appear,
And, lest we pain you, dry the trembling tear.
Oh! yet forgive us if a tear should start,
Spite of the struggles of an infant's heart;
If e'er a sigh, when most your smiles approve,
Breathe its soft tribute to a Mother's love!
Departed Mother!—cherish'd *here* art thou;
Thy voice of sweetness, and thine angel brow.
Oh! must that voice forever hush'd remain?
And can'st thou never smile on us again?
Still, tho' we see thee not, be thine the care
To shield the infants of thy love with pray'r,
Oh! still thy guardian smile of fondness shed,
And we will love thee, Mother, tho' thou'rt dead!
Yet ours is hope—for e'er his parting breath
The best of Fathers yielded up in death;
As in his languid eye stood life's last tear,
He told us we should find our Parents *here*.
" Tho' from these feeble limbs, my Babes," he sigh'd,
" Swift to the heart the pulses all retire:
And soon, ah soon! its throbbings must divide
Forever from his weeping Babes their Sire—

Yet mourn not with an anguish too severe;
Oh! weep not ever o'er a Father's tomb!
For many a sigh is yours, and many a prayer,
And Beauty waits to rear you into bloom—
Farewell!"—he sigh'd—and feeble was the sigh;
For hardly did the pulse of being glide:
Then, lifting up to heaven his closing eye,
He bless'd his Babes, and—died!——
Lamented Spirit! sweet be thy repose!
Sweet as thy parting voice that sooth'd our woes:
For *one*, still bleeding with the recent smart,
Has press'd thy weeping infants to his heart;
And Friends, far dearer to their souls than life,
Contend to shield them with a generous strife.

ROSINA.

Yes, dearest Sister! our Papa *was right;*
For we have Friends and Patrons here this night.
What, tho' Mama is gone, methinks I trace
Her smile that blest us, in each beauteous face.
Th' heaven has forc'd our dear Papa to die,
A Father beams from each indulgent eye.

FANNY.

Our kind Protectors! tho' we boast the while
At best to please you but a grateful heart;
Ah, who can tell, but, cherish'd by *your* smile,
The Infant may surpass its Parents' art?
So, rescued, from the bleak, autumnal gale,
The little shivering tenant of the vale,
To gentler skies by some kind hand convey'd,
In more than native beauty is array'd;
Points its soft tendrils mid the winter's gloom,
And springs and blushes with protracted bloom.

ROSINA.

Our Parents *now*! than Parents dearer far!
Sweet to your slumbers be the Orphan's prayer!
That prayer, oh, never will we fail to give,
Nor cease to love you, till we cease to live.

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